

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013
6:30 PM**

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brannelly, M. McCarthy, Banta, Taylor-Moye, Olson, *Brantley, T. McCarthy, Lyons, Bonney, Blunt, dePara, *Silva, Ayala, Martinez, Paoletto, Baker, *Holloway

ABSENT: Council member: Vizzo-Paniccia

*=arrived late

Council President McCarthy called the public speaking session to order at 6:40 pm.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013 AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

Ethan Book
144 Coleman Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Pending matters of claims regarding excessive police actions.

Mr. Book stated he has resided in Bridgeport for years. He said he runs a limousine service in Fairfield and he noted that he was a candidate for the senate. He relayed that during the late 1980's; he addressed issues regarding local and state matters concerning CRRRA activities. He recalled a police action that occurred on May 5, 2010. He said vehicle was towed and he clarified that it wasn't stolen or reported as being stolen. The vehicle was towed and impounded and it remains parked at Jerry's Auto to this day (the vehicle was owned by Mrs. Corriano and registered by her. Subsequently, a small claims action was filed and Attorney Conte handled it. During January 2012, he said he addressed the city council about this matter and he was in contact with the city attorney. On November 5, 2012, he said he received an email regarding the matter, but he wasn't familiar with the sender who was an elected public official. *Mr. Book submitted his testimony to the city clerk.*

Cecil C. Young
99 Carroll Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Complaint regarding the handling of
constituents.

Mr. Young mentioned that he is a taxpayer. He relayed the situation about his unjust termination. He questioned if the city council and the mayor are aware that they work for the people. He went on to speak about snow removal. He suggested that if there is another storm, public facilities should make sure that a path is cleared enough to allow cars to get in and out. And when the snow stops; they should then implement the off-side of the street parking; noting that it's unfair to penalize taxpayers. He returned to the topic of his unjust termination and he said he was troubled that as a constituent, he can't get one word from anyone on the city council about his complaint. He said he was tired of being treated like a nigger. Council President McCarthy asked him to refrain from using that word. Mr. Young continued to address the city council with name calling as he further vented about his unjust termination. He emphasized that he was terminated, he didn't resign and he felt the city should be held accountable.

John Marshall Lee – *below is the statement he read before the city council:*

Comments to CITY COUNCIL MARCH 4, 2013

The snow shovel in my hand tonight is a symbol. It is a symbol of the failure of this Council and this administration to look out for the needs of the citizens of Bridgeport two weeks ago specifically. You remember the historic storm for most towns in this area? Perhaps you remember the response in Bridgeport? You were present for critical comments from a variety of citizens I hope? I know there were positive responses by some but those could not have been helpful to your learning curve. What did the City learn? Or are you still processing these comments?

I observed that citizens expected better technology use by City leaders in the hours before the snow came and over the next 48 hours. Could people have been helped by warning about on street parking? They were in New Haven apparently. And what about plans to hire outside firms? What were the plans and who was ready to help early in the storm? And decisions to seek Federal funding for an emergency and allowing the mess to become more of an emergency than it needed to be? So people shoveled like never before and will remember how you let the entire City down.

Are you letting the City down in other areas? The City Operating budget was due Saturday according to the budget outline from page 33 of the CAFR. Where is it? The longer it is withheld from you, the briefer time you will have to review three budgets this year, not just one. And where will the Capital Budget be released and posted? When are the public hearings scheduled? What prevents you from allowing questions to be asked as part of Budget and Appropriations Committee meetings? And will you appoint a replacement to that overwhelmed committee due to the retirement of Bob Curwen?

There is much up in the air at this time. It's true. But you ran for this position and yet many of the people I talk with feel you are running from it in the way you do not talk with the public, do not engage in dialogue or discussion and show no sign of hearing comments about failing close attention to Charter, Ordinance or other directing regulatory language.

There are barely seven months to City Council elections. Will you consider starting your deliberations with a fourth budget request? It would show what needs to be done if you levied no property tax increase this year. We survived the snow storm in our own ways. People started talking to each other. What if some non-essential services were dropped entirely? What if the "ghost position" game ends and department goals and status towards goals are posted on department sites each month? And monthly financial reports as well? How does a taxpayer know what they are getting in terms of service and expense otherwise? It's really that simple. Get out your shovels, and move whatever is blocking a pathway to public knowledge and understanding of City finances. Read the financial reports and tell the people why Police and Fire Overtime continue to cause a projected deficit at year end. Stop wringing your hands. Get your shovels out and use them. Talk with your neighbors and answer questions that others send to you regularly, please, as I do. I am doing this for the benefit of the public and know that you can hear me, yet ignore me. Time is not on your side I suspect in this game of HIDE FROM THE PUBLIC. Time is running out as we come to Capital and Operating budgets. Time will tell.

*John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605
peopleins@aol.com
Business: 203-259-9642*

Clyde Nicholson

Mr. Nicholson recalled what happened during the blizzard. He questioned how many council persons had their car towed during the storm – *he displayed a sign that read "NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW"*. He made the point that the snow resulted in a blizzard, not just a regular storm. He said he lived on Park Avenue where there is no off-street parking and he didn't have any way to move his car. He stressed that for the city to tow cars was totally illegal and it's not the way the taxpayers of the city should be treated. He said in order for residents to adhere to the off-street parking regulation; he thought they needed to bring the snow plows out and move the snow with the car. He further stressed that the people who incurred towing charges should be reimbursed; especially the citizens with that are struggling financially. He said he personally lost money from the tow and he felt that the city owes him and others.

He went on to speak about the issue of selling illegal guns. He said it was time for the city to step up and take a stand about the issue, because citizens aren't going to take it anymore.

Amos Brown

Mr. Brown spoke about looking at all the young men that were murdered during 2012. He said he has listened to the governor and the mayor about illegal guns and he found that all the paperwork concerning the matter is about assault weapons; but there is no discussion about illegal hand guns that are coming out the back doors. He suggested that the answer to get rid of assault weapons is not to make them and then they can't be sold. He said the same thing applied to hand guns. He emphasized the problem of young black men getting killed by guns. To further make his point, he relayed that the citizens have a right to vote as they wish, noting that in the past, we didn't have a choice but now we do. He recalled a story about a 5-year old that got killed by a gun. He stressed that it was time to run the country with some sense.

The public hearing session closed at 7:10 pm.

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace

Bridgeport, Connecticut

ATTENDANCE: Council members: Brannelly, M. McCarthy, Banta, Taylor-Moye, Olson, Brantley, T. McCarthy, Austin, Lyons, Bonney, Blunt, dePara, Silva, Ayala, Martinez, Paoletto, Baker, Holloway

ABSENT: Council member: Vizzo-Paniccia

Mayor Finch called the meeting to order at 7:15 pm.

Prayer - Council member Blunt offered the prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance - the pledge was led by Council member Taylor-Moye.

Roll Call - the city clerk took the roll call and announced there was a quorum.

Mayor Finch briefly addressed the issue of gun control. He clarified that that entire city council is in favor of the governor's gun legislation. He clarified that the city council cannot make laws regarding guns, because they are not a federal governing body. However, he emphasized that they are backing the president, the governor and others to fight the problem because they are all on the same team.

Black History Month Celebration

Council member Blunt introduced the Bridgeport Boys Choir that has been in existence for twenty-six years. The choir began the program by singing the Star Spangled Banner.

The choir director thanked Mayor Finch and the city council for inviting them tonight. The choir sang another song that consisted of melodic harmonies titled "The Sun is Arising in my Soul". The choir concluded by singing a South African folk song – *to applause!*

Mayor Finch commented that the choir director should leave their contact information in case there are other young men that might be interesting in joining.

Council member Blunt spoke on behalf of the American Black and Latino Caucus in honor of Black History Month. He expressed that although they were celebrating it late, they are on time to recognize those past and present that have made accomplishments that are acknowledged in our history. He requested that the members present of the caucus stand to be recognized. He further thanked Mayor Finch and Council President McCarthy. And he thanked the Bridgeport Boys Choir for their magnificent voices.

Council President McCarthy stated that Council member Vizzo-Paniccia was absent tonight because she was still recovering from surgery.

Mayoral Proclamations: In Recognition of Theresa Wilson, Earnest Parker and Levern Gaskin in Observance of Black History Month 2013.

City Council Citations: In Recognition of Theresa Wilson, Earnest Parker and Levern Gaskin in Observance of Black History Month 2013.

Mayor Finch, Council President McCarthy and Council members Brantley, Bonney, dePara, Taylor-Moye came forward to present the citations.

Council President McCarthy stated that the city council always likes to recognize positive and great things that happen in Bridgeport. He expressed that there were specifically three people being honored tonight that consisted of a woman and men who have become people of honor in their community. He said it was important to acknowledge these people and continue to encourage the children in our city.

Mayor Finch stated that they have celebrated great cultural events during the month of February. He expressed that it was an exciting time of year to celebrate Black History Month – *he held up the tote bag that was created to highlight Black History Month that consisted of the faces of local and worldwide persons that have made notable contributions to black history.*

The recipients that were present to receive the citation came forward:

Theresa Wilson came forward. Mayor Finch expressed that he and Ms. Wilson have parented their children through the schools together. He relayed that she was a great inspiration to young women in the city – *he read the proclamation that recognized Theresa Wilson for promoting higher education in the community.*

Council member Brantley congratulated Ms. Wilson. She recalled that she had an opportunity to travel to different cities with her on one of the tours. She expressed the amazing work that she does with youth. She mentioned that she also grew up with Theresa and she acknowledged that she personally has been taught by some of the finest people in Bridgeport about what it means to serve the city. She noted that many of the children that Theresa has taught have gone on to achieve great success in their chosen profession.

Council President McCarthy read and presented the citation to Theresa Wilson and congratulated her – *a group picture was taken.*

Ms. Wilson thanked the Mayor and city council for being recognized. She expressed that the citation meant a lot to her, noting that she grew up in the Bridgeport schools. She expressed that she loved what she does because it works. She relayed that when you pose the question of how the children are, they have to be aware; because if the children aren't alright, then the community isn't alright. She spoke about the number of years she and her students have been going on the tours.

Council member Brantley acknowledged Theresa Wilson's mother in the audience. She expressed that she also has been an inspiration and role model to youth also.

Levern Gaskin came forward. Council member Bonney stated that it was an honor to present the citation. He relayed that he has known Mr. Gaskin for most of his life, recalling all the ball games they played together. He relayed a humorous heartfelt story about playing sports. He said Mr. Gaskin always encouraged the youth and tried to teach them. He said he has been a positive influence in many lives. He mentioned some sports figures that were mentored by Mr. Gaskin in the past have gone on to do great things.

Mayor Finch thanked Mr. Gaskin for serving the youth in Bridgeport, noting that he recognizes the importance of sports and athletics to help keep youth on the straight and narrow.

Council President McCarthy asked Larry Osborne to come forward to say a few words about his friend. Mr. Osborne expressed that he has known Mr. Gaskin for fifty years. He spoke of him fondly remembering the ball games they played together and the great impact that he has had on youth sports that have led to championships.

Ernest Parker came forward. Council President McCarthy asked State Representative Clemons to join them up front to speak a few words about Mr. Parker. Representative Clemons deferred to Reverend Moore to speak about Ernest Parker.

Reverend Moore expressed that it was an honor and privilege to say a few words about his best friend for over fifty-five years. He stated that he has been an inspiration to him, Representative Clemons, Council member Blunt and others as a trailblazer when there was no trail and he has made some people that were destined for failure, become positive and successful in their chosen career and profession. He expressed that those persons can lay their success at the feet of Ernest Parker and he couldn't think of a person more deserving to receive the citation.

Ernest Parker recognized Mayor Finch, the city council members and others who have influenced his life. He relayed that he had been a juvenile counselor for years, noting that he used his caseload to recruit kids from all housing projects to attend the program "Upward Bound". He explained that nine (9) groups were formed to identify issues and problems that plague the black community. They also engaged in other activities such as parties and trips to visit colleges. He said he sincerely appreciated the award.

Mayor Finch expressed that Ernest Parker was one of the few people who he felt helped build up the City of Bridgeport person by person and family by family. He recalled that the Upward Bound Program was a good program that not many remember, but he thought they could use another program like it today.

Council President McCarthy read the citation and he congratulated Ernest Parker – *a group picture was taken.*

Mayor Finch returned to the city council meeting agenda.

Moment of silence – was requested by Council member Lyons for John Stafstrom's mother who passed away.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: February 4, 2013

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER AUSTIN SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

37-12 Communication from Central Grants and Community Development re: Consolidated Plan 2013-2018 PY 39 Annual Action Plan: Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Homeless Emergency Solutions Grant Program (HESG), HOME Investment Partnership Program, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA), referred to Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee.

38-12 Communication from City Attorney re: Twenty Day Notice to Settle Pending Litigation Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 2.10.130: Clarissa Laracuenta, **ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.**

39-12 Communication from Engineering re: Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, amend Chapter 15.44 Flood Damage Prevention, referred to Ordinance Committee.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLOWAY MOVED TO REFER COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

MATTERS TO BE ACTED UPON (CONSENT CALENDAR):

Mayor Finch asked if there were any items to be removed from the consent calendar.

There were none heard.

The city clerk read the consent calendar items into the record.

- *166-11** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee
Report re: Resolution concerning approval of the Mill Hill Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) By-Laws and Boundaries, as proposed and delineated by the Mill Hill Revitalization Zone Planning Committee.
- *21-12** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee
Report re: Grant Submission: 2012-2013 Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA) Title III Funds Program – East Side Senior Center Project.
- *22-12** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report
re: Grant Submission: 2012-2013 Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging (SWCAA) Title III Funds Program – Elderly Hispanic Program.
- *24-12** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee Report
re: Acquisition of City Property located at 645 Knowlton Street.
- *146-11(PHO)** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee
Report re: Public Hearing Ordered for March 18, 2013: re Disposition of City-Owned Properties by Auction, Sale to Abutter or by RFP (Request for Public Hearing).
- *30-12(PHO)** Economic and Community Development and Environment Committee
Report re: Public Hearing Ordered for March 18, 2013: re Disposition of City-Owned Property Located at 956 Main Street – City Savings Bank Building (Request for Public Hearing).
- *27-12** Budget & Appropriations Committee Report re: Approval of Tax Anticipation Notes to Pay Current Expenses and Obligations of the City (\$110,000,000).

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HOLLOWAY MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER M. McCARTHY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Announcements:

Council President expressed that today was Mayor Finch's birthday – *the council sang Happy Birthday to the mayor and a cake with candles was brought out.*
Mayor Finch thanked everyone for remembering!

Point of personal privilege –

Council member Brantley mentioned that Delta Sigma Theta celebrated an reenactment of the Women's Suffrage March. She expressed that it was important to acknowledge all the noteworthy accomplishments that all women had achieved and contributed to the women's movement – she said there would be an event held on March 23 and she urged everyone to take the time to come out and honor these women.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT McCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** COUNCIL MEMBER T. PAOLETTO SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Graham
Telesco Secretarial Services